

HB 4781
9/6/17



Rep. Hughes and Members of the House Committee on Travel and Outdoor Recreation:

My name is Melissa Werkman, and I am the Executive Director of the Michigan Mountain Biking Association. I represent thousands of mountain bikers in Michigan, as well as over 1200 miles of natural surface trails around the state. The MMBA exists to promote responsible mountain biking and to work toward the goals of common land access and natural resource protection.

Our members not only ride but have had a hand in funding, designing and building most of the mountain biking suitable trails in Michigan – whether they are on state, federal, conservancy, private or municipal land. In most cases, it took several years of relationship building, conversation and negotiation to gain access to build these trails. Access that our members are deeply afraid of being jeopardized should electric bicycles be utilized on them due to user conflict, limited sight lines and terrain that is not manageable on a bicycle that has the capability of traveling at the speeds that electric bicycles can.

While we feel there is a place for electric bicycles on paved trails, we feel strongly that the use of them may not be appropriate on natural surface trails. We believe that the opt-in provision for use of these bikes is the right approach because the use of should them be determined by local trail managers. We also urge you to consider the provision that requires trail managers to fully assess local opinions and concerns prior to authorizing electric bicycles through at least one public hearing.

We want to thank Rep Hughes for sponsoring this important legislation and to all committee members who are considering these new laws.

Sincerely,

Melissa Werkman, Executive Director
Michigan Mountain Biking Association